

Eau Claire Landmarks



VOL. VIX

Published by the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission

2006/2007

Welcome to another issue of "Eau Claire Landmarks," the newsletter published by the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission for those who have an interest in historic properties in our community.

The Landmarks Commission is a seven-member citizen board appointed by the Eau Claire City Council whose charge is to encourage the preservation of the City's architecturally and historically significant buildings and neighborhoods. The Commission is also involved with educational activities which help inform people about Eau Claire's past and which fosters an appreciation for our history.

The City of Eau Claire currently has 69 individual local landmarked properties and 2 local landmark districts which

contain a total of 155 properties. The two local landmark districts include the Randall Park Historic Landmark District which was designated in 1983 and the Third Ward Historic Landmark District, designated in 1985. These two areas are also listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places; however, the boundaries of the local districts differ somewhat from the national and state districts.

The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission is available to answer questions that owners of historic buildings may have concerning restoration or remodeling work. In addition, the Commission is more than happy to provide general design assistance to property owners concerning exterior work that they may be contemplating.

Members of the Landmarks Commission include: John Mann (Chairman), Gary Eisold, Jenny Ebert, Ken Fulgione, Sue Nelson, Bob Von Haden, and Ken Ziehr.

The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission welcomes any suggestions that will help in the preservation of our architectural heritage for future generations to enjoy and study. Comments or questions may be directed to the City of Eau Claire's Department of Community Development at 839-4914.

Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Owning a historic property in Wisconsin provides an owner with several benefits. One of these is the opportunity to receive federal and state income tax credits for rehabilitation work on historic properties. Currently there are programs available for both income-producing properties and owner-occupied homes which are applicable for major rehabilitation work on a property.

Contact the Wisconsin Historical Society at 608-264-6490 or 608-264-6491 to find out more information about the program or refer to the web site for the Wisconsin Historical Society (wisconsinhistory.org). Please remember that rehabilitation work must be approved by the State before the work starts in order to be eligible for Wisconsin tax credits.



1011 Fifth Avenue, one of Eau Claire's most recently landmarked properties

Exterior Renovation Projects

Remember that any exterior renovation work that requires a building permit must be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission prior to issuance of a building permit by the City. This applies to all individually landmarked properties and properties located within the Randall Park and Third Ward Historic Landmark districts.

Generally, exterior work that requires a building permit is work that is structural in nature or would involve a change in the architectural character of the building. Examples of work that would require a building permit include:

- additions
- residing
- rescue platforms and additional exiting requirements
- construction of garages or storage buildings
- window replacement (if size or style is changed)
- alteration or replacement affecting a structural component of a building (foundation, rafters, joists, columns, posts, etc.)
- other work resulting in the change or removal of an architectural feature of a structure

Work which is primarily maintenance related and which does not change the appearance of the building can be approved administratively.

If you are not sure whether a project you are planning needs to be reviewed by the Commission, contact the City's Inspection Services Division at 839-4947 early on in your planning of the project. By contacting the Commission early on, the Commission may be able to give you valuable information which may help in your project.



Board members of the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation standing next to the plaque sponsored by the Foundation. The plaque is located on the south side of the Eau Claire River, east of S. Dewey Street (See pg. 5 for more information about the plaque program.)

Historic Residential Loan Program

The Landmarks Commission continues to have loan funds available through the Historic Residential Loan Program (HRLP). This program provides low-interest loan funds for locally designated landmark properties in the city. Funds are available for exterior work such as: painting, reshingling, porch restoration, chimney and gutter repairs, tuck pointing, and foundation work. Interior improvements may be eligible if the work is necessary to correct an item which threatens the life of the structure. Funds cannot be used for such items as: additions, new siding, landscaping, sidewalk or driveway repair, construction of storage buildings or new garages, etc.

The interest rate for these loans is fixed at 3% and amortized over a 10-year period. Up to \$17,500 is available for single-family dwellings, with additional funds available if there are additional dwelling units in the building.

The loans are in the form of a second mortgage on the property. Individually landmarked dwellings and dwellings located in the Randall Park and Third Ward Historic Landmark districts are eligible for these funds. It is important to note that property owners do not have to be low-income in order to be eligible for this loan program. However, a basic housing code inspection is required to insure that minimum housing standards are met, which include such things as hand railings on stairways, cover plates on electrical outlets and other basic code regulations.

Among the homeowners who have benefitted from the program are Paul and Nuria Hoff. Projects completed on their home at 1435 Park Avenue include repair of stucco on the home's chimney, structural repair to the exterior of the garage, a new roof on the home's screened porch, and repainting of the exterior of the house.

Paul Hoff describes the HRLP as a "wonderful program... encouraging owners of unique properties" to main-

tain their historic integrity. The Hoff's describe a good experience with the HRLP, finding the City easy to work with, responsive to their needs, and attentive to the work being completed. Hoff concluded that because of the repairs the Historic Residential Loan Program allowed him to complete, the property is now "aesthetically and structurally better than ever."

Anton Smets and Rae Schilling have also utilized the loan program. Projects completed on their home at 132 Marston Avenue (the James Barber House) include custom carpentry to repair wooden trim on the home's exterior, tuck pointing of exterior brick, and repainting of the exterior of the house.

Smets commented that although there were stringent requirements to be met in the loan approval process, the low-interest loan was well worth any additional effort required. "The people were nice and helpful," said Smets, "and were on-site often to offer assistance."

If you are thinking about a project for your home, now's the time to look into the loan program. For more details, contact the Department of Community Development at 839-4914.

Landmarks Web Site

Information pertaining to the Landmarks Commission and historic preservation in the City can be found on the City's website, and more will be added as time allows. The City's web address is <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us>. You can get to this information by selecting the Historic Preservation link located on the home page.



2425 14th Street, one of Eau Claire's most recently landmarked properties

New Local Landmark Properties

Three properties were recently designated as local landmarks by the Landmarks Commission, bringing the total number of landmarked properties to 69. These most recent additions to the City's official listing of historic properties include the Charles and Aurora Susie Mittelstadt House located at 1011 Fifth Avenue; the Andrew Moholt House located at 2425 14th Street; and the Thomas McDermott House, located at 403 W. Grand Avenue.

The Mittelstadt House, constructed in 1921, is an exceptionally well-preserved example of the American Foursquare, the most common of the four principle sub-types of the Prairie style popularized in the early twentieth century by Frank Lloyd Wright and his associates. The two-story, square, mass-planned form became nationally popular during the first three decades of the twentieth century and was featured in contemporary pattern books and popular magazines.

The Mittelstadt family and, in particular, both Charles and son, Homer, were very prominent individuals within the business community with the H. T. Lange Grocery Company and were very involved in such civic organizations as the YMCA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Temple of Free Masonry.

The second property, the Andrew Moholt House, was also constructed in 1920-21 in the Craftsman Bungalow style, with the low-pitched roof, wide eaves, decorative braces and gabled dormers typical of the style. Popularized in California at the turn of the twentieth century, the bungalow style represented structural simplicity, efficient use of space, and understated style. Most of the living area is placed on the ground floor.

Andrew Moholt came to the Eau Claire area in 1881, gradually acquiring considerable acreage in the Moholt Road area, where he established the largest apple orchard in the state. In 1942, the land was platted, becoming the Moholt Addition to the Town of Union.

important industrial district on the City's north side, home to such other businesses as the Phoenix Manufacturing Company and Walters Brewery.

The final property, the Antique Emporium building (formerly the Masonic Temple), located at 319 S. Barstow Street/306 Main Street, was the first building erected in Eau Claire designed specifically for use as a Masonic Temple. Constructed in 1898-1899, the Masonic Temple is built in the Romanesque style of architecture, one of only two surviving examples of this late-nineteenth century style, although it once flourished in the City.

Waterway Historic Marker Program

The Eau Claire Landmarks Commission recently dedicated two additional historic markers along the City's recreational trail and riverfront. This brings the total number of markers to 17, all

located along Half Moon Lake and the Eau Claire and Chippewa Rivers. The purpose of the plaques is to inform and educate the public about Eau Claire's history and call attention to persons, places, events, and businesses that were significant in Eau Claire's colorful past. Each marker is sponsored by a local business, family, or organization.

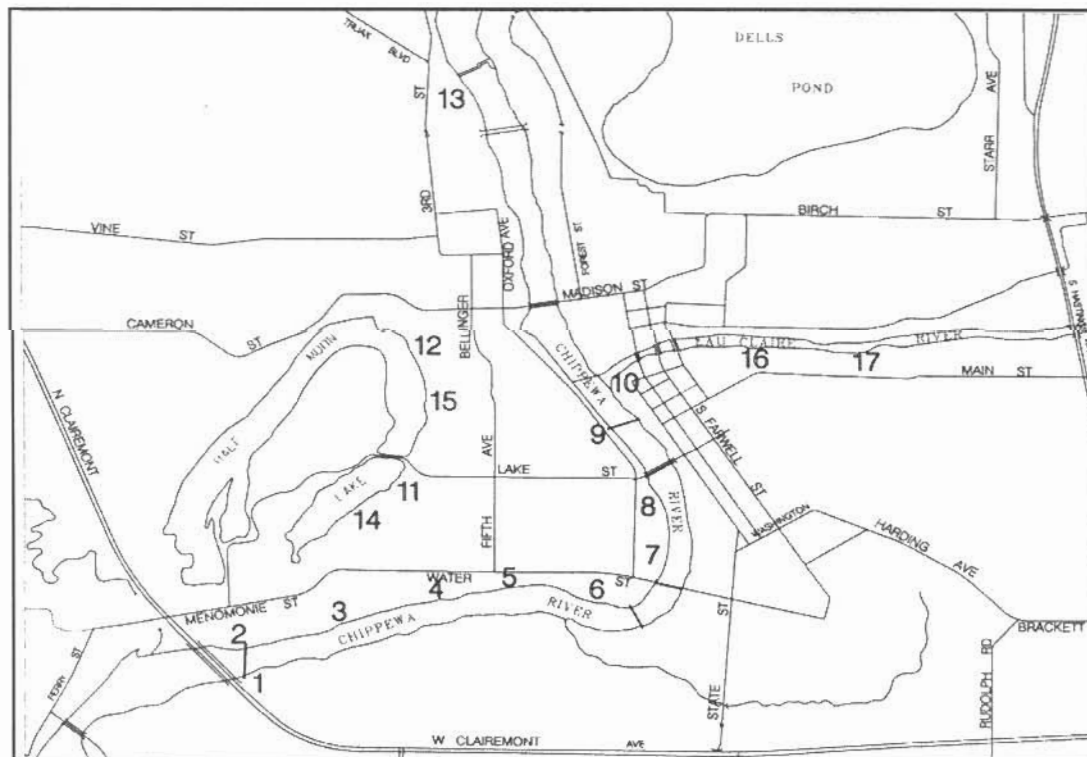
Entitled "Eau Claire's Connection to the Soo Line Railroad," marker #16 is sponsored by the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation and focuses on the history of the S-bridge and the Soo Line Railroad. This marker is located on the south side of the Eau Claire River, east of S. Dewey Street, at the site where the former Soo Line freight and passenger depots were located.

The most recent historic marker (#17) was sponsored by Barbara Ellen Miller, Jack Hoard, and Carolyn Books Hoard, and is located south of the Eau Claire

River, in Boyd Park. The plaque focuses on the design and history of the Boyd Park Pedestrian Bridge, Eau Claire's link to the great suspension bridges of the early twentieth century.

Other plaque sponsors include: Luther Midelfort, Northern States Power (Xcel Energy), the Eau Claire Landmarks Commission, Water Street Business Improvement District, West Grand Avenue Business Improvement District, the Business Improvement District of Downtown Eau Claire, Joan and David Angell, Anton and Rae Shilling-Smets, UW-Eau Claire, the Hobb's Foundation, Judy Lien, Carol and Michael Benrud, the Guettinger Family, and Helen and Jeffrey Benrud.

The Commission is currently looking for sponsors for additional plaques along the trail. Details about sponsoring one of these plaques can be obtained by contacting the Department of Community Development at 839-4914.



PLAQUE TITLES

1. Early Exploration & Settlement
2. Daniel Shaw Lumber Company
3. The River Did Its Part
4. Adin Randall
5. Water Street: Growing Up Along the River
6. "Indian Country" Anishinabe Akhi
7. Owen's Gift to the City
8. Immigrants
9. Eau Claire: Wisconsin's Second City
10. Haymarket Square: Where the Rivers Meet
11. Recreation on Half Moon Lake
12. The Log Flume
13. Lumber & Politics: Building Delles Dam
14. Former Industries
15. Luther Midelfort
16. Eau Claire's Connection to the Soo Line Railroad
17. The Eau Claire River Suspension Bridge

Waterway Plaque Locations

Finally, the McDermott House, constructed in 1887, is a spectacular example of the Queen Anne style, the most prevalent architectural style found in Eau Claire. With its steeply pitched gabled roof, corner turret, wraparound porch, and delicate turned spindlework ornamentation, the McDermott House exhibits many of the stylistic traits of the Eastlake style, one of the four principle sub-types of this classic Victorian design.

Oleson's Livery

The Eau Claire Redevelopment Authority recently approved John Mogensen's proposal to rehab and convert the former Oleson's Livery building located at 316 Wisconsin Street into a restaurant. The building was scheduled for demolition until local preservationists led by the Eau Claire Historic Preservation Foundation asked the RDA to seek development proposals to retain the building.

Constructed in 1894, the livery is a unique building and is the last surviving livery stable in Eau Claire. Oleson's survived the advent of the automobile, housing several motor transportation businesses, including taxi companies and automobile repair shops.

New National Register Properties

Over the past two years, a significant number of Eau Claire properties have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is the official listing of properties throughout the country having some historical or architectural significance at the federal, state, or local level. Over 1,400 individual entries from Wisconsin are included on the National Register.

This has included the expansion of the



403 W. Grand Avenue, one of Eau Claire's most recently landmarked properties

Third Ward National Register District and the creation of a new district called the Park Company District, which is located south and west of Garfield and State Streets. This involves the addition of 158 properties within these two areas.

In addition, two small commercial districts have been added to the National Register. One district is located Downtown and includes 13 buildings. Located to the south of the Eau Claire River and west of Farwell Street, this district features buildings ranging in architectural style from Victorian Italianate to Art Deco and represents the commercial evolution of Eau Claire from its post-settlement period to twentieth-century maturity.

The second commercial district includes the 400 block of Water Street. Located between Fourth and Fifth Avenue, the Water Street National Register District originally served the needs of local residents, isolated from north and east Eau Claire by the Chippewa River. Destroyed by fire in

April 1882, the block was almost immediately rebuilt, with all but one of the structures ready for occupancy before Christmas of the same year. Today, the district includes a collection of pubs, restaurants, and speciality retail establishments.

Three individual commercial buildings were recently listed on the National Register. The first building, the Acoustic Cafe building (originally the Union Auto Company), located at 505 S. Barstow was built in 1917 as an automobile showroom and garage. An example of the neoclassical architecture styles popular at the time, Union Auto Company is the best preserved example of early buildings in Eau Claire specifically designed as automobile dealerships.

The second commercial building is the Drummond Business Block located at 409-417 Galloway Street, which is the only surviving example of late-nineteenth century industrial buildings in the City. Constructed in three phases from 1879 to 1884, the buildings are a remnant of what was once a small but

Resource Materials Available

If you have a question concerning a remodeling project that you are thinking about, the Landmarks Commission may have information available that could help you on your project. The Commission maintains a small library of restoration and remodeling books and pamphlets that can be signed out for review. The collection includes materials on such topics as inspecting a house for possible purchase, how to hire architects and contractors, historically correct color selection for exterior repainting, and several books on commercial and residential styles and terms. In addition, the Commission has most of the issues of the *Old House Journal* from 1976 through the present in its library.

Also, many resources are now offered on-line through the National Parks Service and the Wisconsin Historical Society. The Technical Preservation Services Division of the National Parks Service is the nation's leading provider of information and guidance on the care of historic buildings. Currently, all 44 *Preservation Briefs* are available on-line at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>. A variety of topics on the preservation and repair of historic structures can be accessed through an interactive subject menu. Also available on-line are select editions of the *Preservation Tech Notes*, a publication series providing practical information for practitioners in the preservation field, including architects, contractors, and maintenance personnel, as well as for owners and developers of historic properties. These technical

briefs can be accessed at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/technotes/tntnhome.htm>.

Finally, the Wisconsin Historical Society offers a wealth of information for the owners of historic properties at their website, wisconsinhistory.org.

Landmarks Tour Booklet

The Landmarks Tour booklet is available for purchase at Borders Bookstore, Chippewa Valley Museum and City Hall. The booklet provides a great summary of all the national and local historic properties in Eau Claire.

Eau Claire Landmarks Commission
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